

BEAUTY FROM ASHES

This Study Guide...

...will help us turn what God is saying to us into action steps. The questions and scriptures are here to help us take our "Next Steps." Have a great discussion!

Prayer & Ice Breaker:

Although we celebrated Mother's Day this past weekend, it's important to honor our mothers throughout the year! Let's start with this ice breaker question:

If you could give your mom anything in the world, what would you give her? Share with your group.

Read:

In service this past Sunday, we heard the inspirational testimony of Taya Kyle, the wife of the American Sniper, Chris Kyle. In her story, she shared her incredible journey through the tragic murder of her husband, finding hope in God, her path to forgiveness, and recognizing God's redemptive hand in her life.

From this powerful testimony we can see that God's word in action can give all of us hope and strength as He draws us closer to Him in our darkest times. In this session we will discuss a couple of gems that can be found in Taya's story.

We will all experience challenges and hardships in life. Whether it's as extreme as losing a loved one or simply having a bad week, the struggles of life are inevitable. One of the most important ways to deal with hard times is to stay connected to people. We must find support systems to walk with us on the journey. Read the scripture below:

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Throughout the Word of God, one thing we see is the importance of staying connected to God's community. God created us to be in relationship with others so that we may walk with, support, and encourage one another in life. Stay connected with a small group, surround yourself with godly friends, meet with an accountability partner, etc.

Discussion:

Who do you have as a support system in your life? How have they helped you? Share with your group.

Read:

After her husband was murdered, Taya had a long and unpopular path in front of her – the path of forgiveness. The thought of forgiving the person who took the life of your spouse (or any loved one) is incomprehensible to most. The journey of learning how to forgive can be tough. Our flesh wants others to suffer, however, our job is to let go! Read this scripture:

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

When we do our part, God will do His part. God’s Word teaches us that when we choose to forgive, we will experience His peace. This is a matter of trust. All we need to do is *trust* Him to handle those who’ve hurt us.

Discussion:

Is there any area in your life that you might be having a hard time trusting God with? Share with your group. (i.e. finances, trying to start a family, establishing a career, etc.)

Read:

As we continue to walk through life with all of its mountains and valleys, it’s important that we look for God’s hand in it all. In Taya’s testimony, she shared how God promised her beauty through the ashes. She looks back and sees how God took a tragedy and redeemed it for a beautiful testament of His love, grace, and peace. He wants to do the same thing for each of us. God is capable of taking the worst and tragic circumstances in life, and turning them into something beautiful. He wants to take grief and sorrow and turn it into joy and praise.

“As for those who grieve over Zion, God has sent me to give them a beautiful crown in exchange for ashes, To anoint them with gladness instead of sorrow, to wrap them in victory, joy, and praise instead of depression and sadness.” (Isaiah 61:3)

What Will You Do?

As you go through the rest of the week, be more intentional about looking for God’s hand at play in your life. When you’re having a bad day or things aren’t working out the way you had planned, stop, pause, and ask God if He might be up to something.

Stay connected with other believers for prayer, help, and encouraging words. Progressively work on fully trusting God in all areas of your life, and remember that no matter the struggle, God can create beauty from ashes.